calculated the total financial loss suffered because of non-fulfilment of the commitments by these companies;

(d) whether any of these companies have behaved in a similar manner for other commitments in telecom field;

(e) whether Government are thinking of blacklisting these companies for lapses on their part; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) These two companies were issued Letter of Intent which was accepted by them. However, they failed to sumbit the Performance Bank Guarantee and Financial Bank Guarantee of requisite amounts required to be furnished in accordance with the provisions of tender documents as well as instructions contained in the letter of Intent. Therefore, on account of non-compliance of aforesaid terms and conditions Government invoked their Earnest Money Bank Guarantees of Rs. 25 crores in case of M/s Essar and of Rs. 5 crores in case of M/s. Techno Telecom (Usha Group). These companies thereafter filed civil suits in the High Court of Delhi and their cases are sub-judice.

(c) Government has already taken action by ordering for feiture of their Earnest Money Ban Guarantees in accordance with the provisions contained in the tender terms and conditions.

(d) No such lapse/instance has come to notice so far.

(e) and (f) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Post Offices in Villages and Gram Panchayats in Maharashtra

4131. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of villages including Gram Panchayats in Maharashtra where opening of Post Office is justified according to population and distance parameters are still without post offices;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take to provide post offices at such villages and Gram panchayats in Maharashtra?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There are 941 villages including Gram Panchayat villages in Maharashtra Circle which justify opening of post office on the two norms of distance and population.

(c) A target of opening 35 EDBOs has been fixed for Annual Plan 1977-98 for Maharashtra Circle, where 35 such villages which would justify opening of a post office on the basis of all the three norms of population, distance and income would be covered subject to availability of resources, Post Offices are opened progressively under Annual Plans subject to norm based justification and availability of resources, while examining the proposals, preference is given to Gram Panchayat Head Quarter Villages. All the 941 villages referred to in (b) may not justify opening of a post office on the financial norm.